

# COUNTY OF YORK

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 19, 2001 (BOS Mtg. 4/17/01)

**TO:** York County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** James O. McReynolds, County Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Application Nos. ZM-55-01 and UP-573-01, Kenneth Dale Moore

### **ISSUE**

Application No. ZM-55-01 and Application No. UP-573-01 are two components of a single development proposal and therefore are being considered together.

**Application No. ZM-55-01** seeks to amend the York County Zoning Map by reclassifying approximately 2.2 acres located on the south side of Wolftrap Road from R20 (Medium Density Single Family Residential) to GB (General Business).

**Application No. UP-573-01**, which is contingent on approval of the rezoning application, is a request for a special use permit to authorize a mini-storage warehouse storage facility on the above-referenced property.

### **DESCRIPTION**

Property Owner: Sherry L. Amory, Grafton Trailer Court, Inc., J. Allen Barbee, Jr., and John B. Graham

Location: South side of Wolftrap Road approximately 350' east of its intersection with Route 17

Area: 2.2 Acres

Frontage: 200' on Wolftrap Road (630)

Utilities: Public water and sanitary sewer available

Topography: Flat

2010 Land Use Map Designation: Medium Density Single Family Residential and General Business

Zoning Classification: R20- Medium Density Single Family Residential

Existing Development: Single family detached home

Surrounding Development:

North: Wolftrap Crossing shopping center  
East: Single family detached home  
South: Grafton Shopping Center  
West: George Washington Memorial Highway (Route 17)

Proposed Development: Mini-storage warehouse facility

## **CONSIDERATIONS/CONCLUSIONS**

1. One of the three subject parcels is zoned R20 (Medium Density Single Family Residential) and the other two are split-zoned: the portions fronting Route 17 are zoned for GB (General Business) uses and the rear portions are zoned for R20 uses (see attached maps). The applicant would like to reclassify the R20 property, consisting of 2.2 acres, from R20 to GB to obtain approval of a use permit to establish a 37,600 square foot mini-storage warehouse facility located on Wolftrap Road approximately 350' from Route 17. The applicant has submitted an application to subdivide the property at or near the existing zoning boundary line for the purpose of establishing the mini-storage facility. The Comprehensive Plan designates this area for Medium Density Single Family and General Business uses, but the designation is general and does not necessarily coincide with a property line or specific dimension.

The applicant has proposed to construct 143 storage units (seven buildings) that contain a total of approximately 37,600 square feet of floor area. If approved, the storage units would be a satellite to the existing Stor-Moore storage facility located nearby at 6000 George Washington Memorial Highway (Route 17). Because the proposal will be a satellite, it will not require an office for an on-site manager with an above-office accessory apartment like most mini-storage warehouse sites. Instead, the site will be operated solely from the existing Stor-Moore facility and monitored with remote cameras and sensors.

2. The majority of the subject property was formerly the site of Grafton Trailer Park until it was closed approximately two years ago. Except for a single family detached home that is encompassed by this proposal, the property is now vacant and sparsely wooded and the trailers have been removed. According to the applicant, the single family detached home on the site would be demolished if these requests were approved and the mini-storage warehouses were constructed. Adjacent to the south of the property is Grafton Shopping Center. In my opinion, the shopping center would not be negatively impacted if this proposal were approved. To the east of the site are several single family detached homes fronting Wolftrap Road and Grafton Branch Estates, which is a single family detached subdivision beyond. The rear and side portions of the subject property are highly visible from these areas. To the west of the site is vacant property not part of this application that, once subdivided, is proposed for development of a convenience store/gas station. The convenience store would anchor the corner of Wolftrap Road and Route 17. North of the site directly across from Wolftrap Road are Carquest Auto Parts Store, Formal Masters, and Wolftrap Crossing, a small strip commercial shopping center. In my opinion, the two areas most likely to be impacted by the proposed warehouse facility are the Wolftrap Road public right-of-way and the residential area to the east of the proposed development.
3. The applicant has submitted renderings indicating that the storage facility will be constructed with a brick façade with gable features that will front on Wolftrap Road (see attached). The façade, unlike

the existing Stor-Moore façade, will be a single story because an apartment for the on-site manager will not be needed. A one-story façade will help make the facility more aesthetically pleasing and will help to reduce the potential for obtrusive views from the Wolfrap Road right-of-way. The remainder of the warehouses will be similar in style and form to the existing storage units at Stor-Moore's facility nearby. In addition, the applicant will use wrought iron style fencing along the front of the site facing Wolfrap Road.

4. If the property were reclassified from R20 to GB, a 35-foot transitional buffer would be required between the adjacent residentially zoned properties and the subject property. As noted, the proposed development would be visible from the adjacent single family detached homes fronting Wolfrap Road and from the Grafton Branch Estates subdivision. Further, if the residentially zoned (R20) property southeast of the site were developed at some time in the future, the warehouses would be highly visible from this area as well. Because the adjacent property to the east and south is residentially zoned, the applicant will have to provide a Type-35 (35-foot) transitional buffer along these borders. These buffers are in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance regulations, but they do not in my opinion offer a buffer sufficient to adequately screen from view the warehouse structures from the residential properties. It is recommended, therefore, that additional landscape plantings be established beyond what is required in the Zoning Ordinance. Because several residential properties – developed and undeveloped - overlook the rear and side areas of the development, it is recommended that the planting ratios of a Type-50 transitional buffer should be used within the 35-foot buffer area. Use of the Type-50 transitional buffer-planting ratio will require 330 evergreen trees and shrubs as opposed to the required 254. In addition, the applicant has proposed to plant a continuous screening row of evergreen plants along the western border of the site between the proposed convenience/gas store and along the portion of the site that fronts Wolfrap Road. The plantings will help mitigate views from all adjacent properties including Route 17. All buffers would be implemented entirely on the subject property side of the zoning line.
5. Mini-storage warehouses do not generate significant amounts of traffic. The Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation manual (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) contains a wide range of trip generation estimates based on different variables (i.e., acres, number of units, number of employees, and gross floor area). I believe that the lowest of these estimates – 38 average daily trip ends – is the most realistic. Under all estimates, A.M. and P.M. peak-hour trip generation would be fewer than ten trips (estimated to be 8), which is negligible. The site would be served by a single entrance on Wolfrap Road.
6. The applicant has not provided a representative picture of the ground-mounted monument sign. Considering that this site will be a satellite to the existing business on Route 17 with no offices on-site, signage at this site should be minimal. However, the applicant should have a sign identifying his business. Therefore, I recommend a ground-mounted monument style sign no greater than 10-feet in height. According to the Zoning Ordinance, the applicant will be permitted up to 50 square feet of sign area. A ground-mounted monument sign is more visually appealing than a pole-mounted sign that would be permitted by right in a GB district and will help reduce visual clutter at this busy intersection. A condition is included in the resolution limiting the sign to a ground-mounted monument-style sign.
7. In conjunction with the ongoing review of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Division has conducted extensive research on outdoor lighting and potential methods of reducing extraneous lighting. Mini-storage warehouse yards are a prime candidate for over-lighting. I believe that the

special lighting standards are appropriate for this development and have included a condition that restricts the type and direction of all outdoor lighting for the warehouse facility. Preventing excess lighting will help ensure that the proposed use does not negatively impact nearby residential property and will help protect nearby motorists from dangerous glare.

8. The Comprehensive Plan designates a portion of this area for General Business uses and a portion for Medium Density Residential uses, with the potential for mixed-use development. It is also true that the rear portion of the applicant's proposed site is designated for Medium Density Residential uses. However, extending the commercial zoning to a depth consistent with other commercial zoning depths in the Grafton area makes sense at this location. The mini-storage proposal offers a suitable transition between the intense retail commercial use proposed for the corner of Wolftrap Road and Route 17 and the residential properties located to the east. The property would not likely be developed for residential use and would be difficult to market because of its size, location, and its proximity to the proposed convenience/gas store. It is estimated that if the property were developed for residential use under the current zoning, approximately 4 homes could be constructed (5 including the existing home proposed for demolition). If that were to occur, the only transition separating the intense retail commercial use would be a 35-foot transitional buffer. If the mini-storage warehouses are developed, the residential area east of the subject site would be buffered from the commercial use (convenience/gas store) by a 35-foot transitional buffer with Type 50-transitional buffer ratios and a land use that is relatively quiet, has no employees, and generates little traffic.

In comparison with commercial zoning depths along Route 17 in the Grafton area, a commercial depth of the area as proposed by the applicant would not be inconsistent. In contrast with some other recent mini-storage proposals, existing commercial property is not being proposed for construction of mini-storage warehouses; rather, existing residential property would be reclassified. Consequently, the net fiscal impact of these proposals is positive. The applicant has submitted as part of the application (See attachment), a comparative fiscal impact narrative describing in numerical terms development of the property under both the existing residential and the proposed commercial zoning categories.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning Commission considered this application at its regular meeting on March 14, 2001 and, subsequent to holding a public hearing, voted 7:0 to recommend approval with amendments to conditions No. 12 and No. 4 of the approving resolution. The Planning Commission recommended that the vinyl-coated chain link fencing recommended by staff in condition No.12 for the rear and side portions of the site of the mini-storage warehouse site be amended to allow the vinyl-coated chain link fencing only along the rear portion (southeast side) of the site. The condition still requires that the remainder of the fencing around the site to be of a masonry or wrought iron style. The applicant concurred with this recommendation. Condition No.4 relates to the maximum net square feet of rentable space. The Commission, at the request of the applicant, agreed to an increase in the amount of rentable space from 34,600 to 37,600. Aside from the applicant and his representative, no citizens spoke during the public hearing.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

In the past 2-3 years, the County has reviewed several applications by the applicant and others for mini-storage warehouse facilities at different locations. To date, each location proposed has been determined to be inappropriate and has been denied. Two major reasons for this have been the mini-storage facility's visibility from major public roadways in the County and its use of existing commercially zoned property. The applicant's proposal satisfies both of these concerns. In comparison with other mini-storage facilities that have been proposed in recent years, the proposed development is in a less visible location along a less heavily traveled corridor and as noted, the proposal does not utilize existing commercially zoned property. If approved, the applicant's proposal will have little, if any visibility from Route 17.

Regardless of their location, mini-storage warehouses represent a fiscal loss to the County when compared to other commercial uses that might have been located at that particular site in their stead. They do, however, provide a service to residents and businesses in the area and there seems to be an untapped market in the County. I believe that this site, if developed properly, can be appropriate for a mini-storage facility. I am concerned about the visual impact of the facility on the residential area to the east of the site and the as yet undeveloped residential property behind Grafton Shopping Center. To satisfy this concern, I am recommending increased plantings. Additionally, a continuous row of evergreens will help screen the western edge of the site from Route 17. I also believe that the mini-storage facility will help provide a good transition between the intense retail commercial use at the corner of Wolftrap Road and Route 17 and the residential properties to the east. Finally, the applicant's proposal is not inconsistent with the objectives for this area set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, I recommend that the Board approve these applications. This can be accomplished through the adoption of proposed Ordinance No. O1-4 (rezoning) Resolution R01-65 (use permit).

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Attachments

- Excerpts of unapproved Planning Commission minutes, 3/14/01
- Zoning map
- Vicinity Map
- Conceptual sketch plan
- Letter to Michael King from Lamont Myers dated March 1, 2001 (includes fiscal impact analysis and renderings)
- Proposed Ordinance No. O1-4
- Proposed Resolution No. R01-65